



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VIA Email: 55929-69118999@requests.muckrock.com

DEC 11 2018

Mr. Jasper Craven
MuckRock News
DEPT. MR 55929
411A Highland Ave.
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

Re: Freedom of Information Act Tracking Number **18-08721-F**, et al.

Dear Mr. Craven:

This letter responds to your electronic Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) dated June 11, 2018, seeking all email communications between officials at the Independence Fund including "shoe Bob", Bob Carey, the Chief Advocacy Officer and the following VA officials: Casin Spero, Darin Selnick, Curt Cashour, David Shulkin, Scott Blackburn, Thomas Bowman, Peter O'Rourke, Brooks Tucker and Jonathan Ulyot, between January 20, 2017 and the present.

Your request was referred to a series of VA Office's for a file search and direct response to you. That information was provided to you in our acknowledgement letter dated June 27, 2018.

To clarify, this response is for the Office of Information Technology (OI&T), responsive records applicable to Scott R. Blackburn, Executive in charge of the VA OIT, assigned FOIA Tracking number **18-08721-F**, between January 20, 2017 and the present.¹ The FOIA Service received your request on June 11, 2018.

We regret the delay you have experienced in receiving a VA response to this portion of your FOIA request. The delay is due to a shortage of FOIA staff coupled with a significant FOIA backlog, and the requirements under 38 C.F.R 1.555 © to consult with the component that originated or have a substantial interest in the records involved prior to any disclosure. The records you are seeking are not maintained in the FOIA Service.

An email search was conducted of the account held by and between Scott R. Blackburn and the specific search terms you provided in your request. No records were located. Therefore, we are providing you a no records response.

If you do not agree with this determination, you have the right to appeal this no records response within 90 days. You may appeal in writing to:

Department of Veterans Affairs
~~General Counsel (024)~~
810 Vermont Avenue
Washington, DC 20420

You may also submit your appeal via facsimile to (202) 273-6388 or via **email** to ogcfoiaappeals@va.gov. If you do appeal this determination, you must specify which part of the determination you are appealing. Please include a copy of your request and my letter with your appeal, and clearly state why you disagree with this determination. If you mail your appeal, both the front of the envelope and the letter should be clearly marked "FOIA Appeal". Please also include a daytime telephone number in case the Office of General Counsel needs additional information.

¹ Please note, Scott R. Blackburn resigned from his position at the VA in April 2018.



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9992As an alternative to submitting an appeal, you may contact the VA FOIA Public Liaison, which was created to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and the VA. Using the VA FOIA Public Liaison does not affect your right to appeal.

You may contact the VA FOIA Public Liaison at:

Department of Veterans Affairs
VA FOIA Public Liaison (005R1C)
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20420
Email: vacofoiaservice@va.gov
Telephone: (877) 750-3642
Facsimile: (202) 632-7581

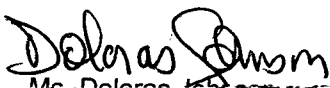
As an alternate to submitting an appeal, you may also contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) whom was created to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies. Using OGIS does not affect your right to appeal. You may contact OGIS in any of the following manners:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives & Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001
Email: ogis@nara.gov
Phone: (202) 741-5770
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448
Facsimile: (202) 741-5769

This concludes the FOIA Service's response to your request. We appreciate your interest in the VA. There are no fees associated with processing your request.

If you have any further questions concerning this letter, you may contact Joan Haynesworth of my staff at (202) 632-8466.

Sincerely,



~~Ms. Deloras Johnson~~
Director, VACO FOIA Service
Office of Privacy Information and Identity Protection (PIIP)
Quality, Privacy, and Risk (QPR)
Office of Information and Technology (OIT)

